

PROGRAMS REPORT

2025 QUARTER 4 OCT - DEC



TE KARANGA
CREATIVE COMMUNITY



OVERALL SUMMARY

Prepared by TK White

This quarter reflected a period of consolidation, responsiveness, and deepening impact across the organisation. Our work continued to centre on creating safe, consistent spaces where young people could connect, reflect, and grow alongside their peers. Delivery increasingly adapted to participant voice and capacity, reinforcing our commitment to meeting young people where they are, rather than expecting them to fit fixed models. Organisationally, this strengthened trust, continuity, and shared leadership, while governance and facilitation structures were further reinforced to support long-term sustainability.

Participant feedback this quarter clearly shows that these spaces are experienced as welcoming, affirming, and emotionally safe. Young people consistently described feeling supported, valued, and free to try without fear of judgement. This sense of safety allowed participants to rebuild confidence, reconnect with creativity, and form genuine friendships. Many shared that having access to consistent, caring adults and peers helped them feel seen and understood during periods of uncertainty or challenge.

Across the quarter, strong social and wellbeing outcomes were evident. Participants spoke about improved confidence, deeper self-awareness, and stronger relationships with others. For many, the space became a stabilising force — helping them redirect away from harmful patterns, regain motivation, and reconnect with a sense of purpose. Creative milestones often reflected deeper internal shifts, with young people expressing pride not just in what they made, but in who they were becoming.

Engagement naturally fluctuated as young people navigated exams, work, whānau responsibilities, health, and seasonal pressures. These shifts were met with flexibility and care, allowing participants to step back when needed and return without judgement. This approach reinforced trust and long-term connection, and many young people demonstrated growth in how they managed competing demands — communicating more openly, setting boundaries, and re-engaging when ready.

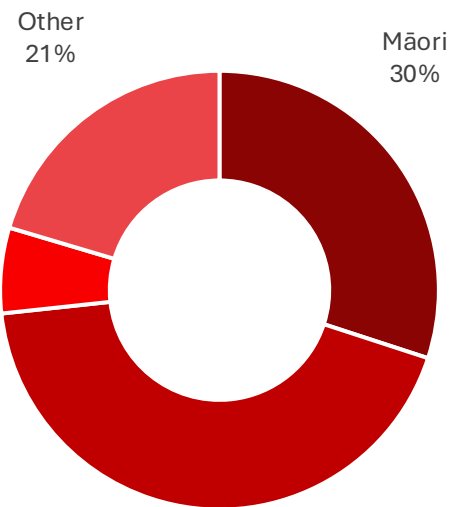
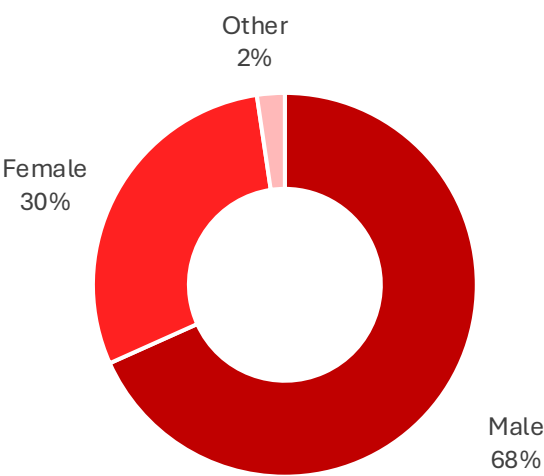
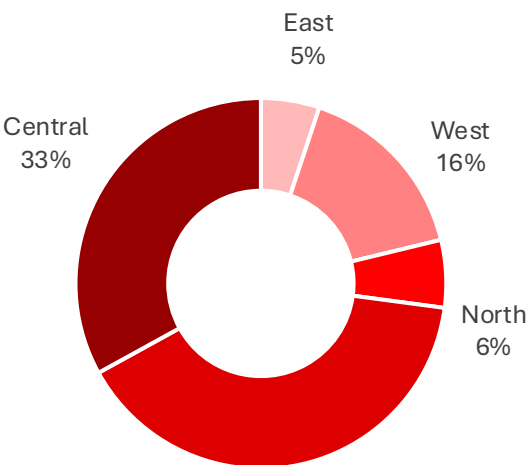
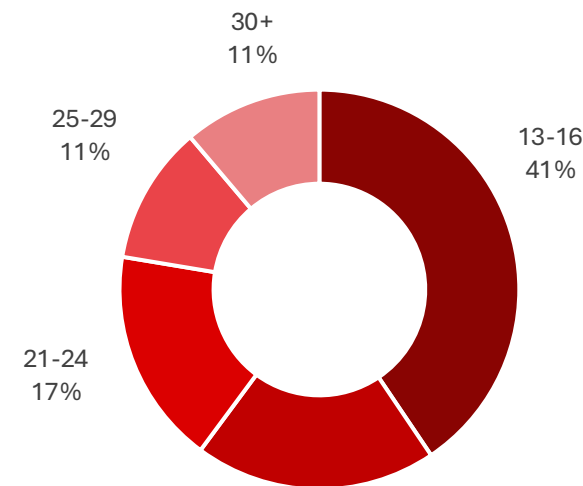
Key learnings this quarter reaffirmed that depth of engagement matters more than scale. Smaller or quieter moments frequently led to the most meaningful outcomes, including honest kōrero, strengthened relationships, and increased self-belief. Peer-to-peer learning emerged as a powerful driver of confidence and leadership, strengthening collective ownership of the space and reinforcing a culture of care.

Overall, this quarter confirmed that our values-led, relational approach continues to positively shape how young people view themselves, their communities, and their futures. By prioritising connection, dignity, and wellbeing, we are supporting young people to build confidence, agency, and a strong sense of belonging — outcomes that extend well beyond our programmes and into everyday life.

DATA TOTALS



Participant stats: 717



CONTENTS & PROGRAMS



CREATIVE PATHWAYS

Weekly program for 13-17-year-olds not in education or employment, fostering positive learning experiences, creativity, and career exploration.

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NAVIGATORS

Free weekly music workshop connecting & engaging young people through shared experiences, stories, and creativity. Open to young people aged 16-24.

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CREATIVE LABS

Empowering young people with local resources, equipment, and guidance. Fostering creativity, connecting like-minded individuals, and nurturing the next generation of artists and musicians.

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Preparing aspiring creatives for future work environments. Supporting rangatahi with business ideas and focusing on artist professional, personal, and business development.

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EVENTS

Throughout the year we deliver events for our rangatahi to showcase their skills as artists in their chose creative industry.

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TUAKANA TEINA

Offering personalised support through mentoring sessions, creative guidance, personal and professional development, whānau support, and community connections.





CREATIVE PATHWAYS

OVERVIEW

Creative Pathways delivers 8–10 week creative programs within alternative education settings, designed to re-engage young people aged 13–17 who are not currently in school or employment. Through hands-on creative projects, cultural activities, and exposure to industry role models, participants are encouraged to explore their identities, discover new passions, and develop transferable skills. The program provides an inclusive, supportive environment that builds confidence, inspires personal growth, and opens pathways toward meaningful futures.

PERSONAL OUTCOMES



Increased confidence and self-expression through creative and cultural activities



Strengthened sense of identity and personal pride



Improved social skills and peer relationships within inclusive learning spaces



Greater self-awareness and openness through transformative moments of growth

CREATIVE OUTCOMES



Development of transferable creative and technical skills across multiple artforms



Exposure to industry professionals and creative career pathways



Experience designing, producing, and showcasing original work



Increased motivation and readiness to engage in future education or employment opportunities



CREATIVE PATHWAYS



Facilitated by Hariata Makiha, Albert Purcell, Lincoln Keepa & Thomas Steed

Report by Albert Purcell

This quarter, Creative Pathways focused on consolidation, completion, and reflection as students moved toward the end of the year. The primary creative focus was revisiting stencil art and T-shirt printing projects from earlier quarters, giving participants time to refine their designs using iPads and Apple Pencils before transferring them onto wooden canvases or heat-pressed AS Colour tees. This approach allowed students to experience the full creative process through to completion. Participants who had unfinished work were supported to bring their projects to a close, while new students were guided through starting fresh stencil pieces. Those who had completed multiple projects were encouraged to explore new ideas and build on their existing skills. Alongside this, we delivered two one-off two-hour sessions with one group of 30 participants, offering a choice between stencil art and music-making workshops. The quarter also concluded with graduations, providing an important moment to acknowledge growth, effort, and achievement.

HIGHLIGHTS

One of the strongest highlights this quarter was seeing returning students step into leadership roles. Participants who had been with the programme for multiple years showed real confidence and ease using the iPads and Procreate, often supporting newer students without being asked. This peer-led support made a big difference, especially during a term where new students joined partway through and time was limited. Another highlight was how the team adapted delivery to suit fluctuating numbers and mixed experience levels. When more than 15 students were present and devices were limited, processes were streamlined and expectations adjusted to ensure everyone still felt included. Despite these shifts, we were able to build stronger relationships with students and maintain a positive, connected environment. Seeing students complete physical artworks they could take home — whether stencils or T-shirts — gave a real sense of pride and achievement at the end of the year.

CHALLENGES

This quarter required a high level of adaptability. New students joining mid-term meant we needed to bring people up to speed quickly, often skipping steps or adjusting activities to suit the group. Limited resources — particularly having fewer iPads than students — meant sessions needed careful coordination. Practical challenges like keeping devices charged, managing Apple Pencil losses, and navigating class absences added extra pressure, especially during a busy end-of-year period. While none of these stopped delivery, they did require constant adjustment and flexibility from facilitators.

LEARNINGS

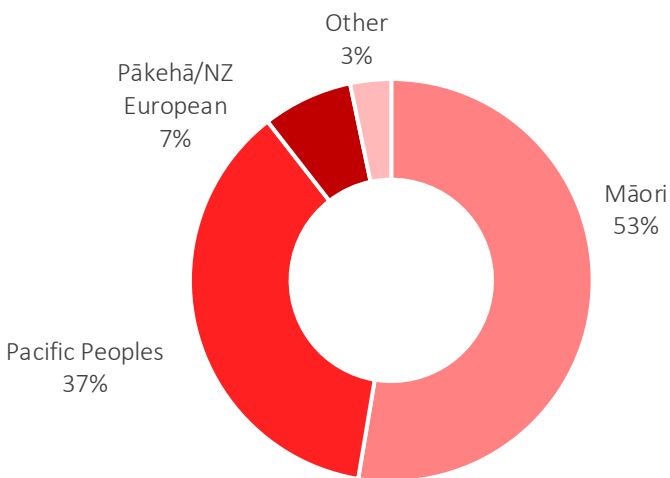
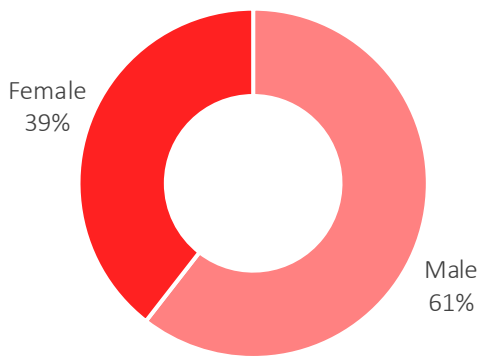
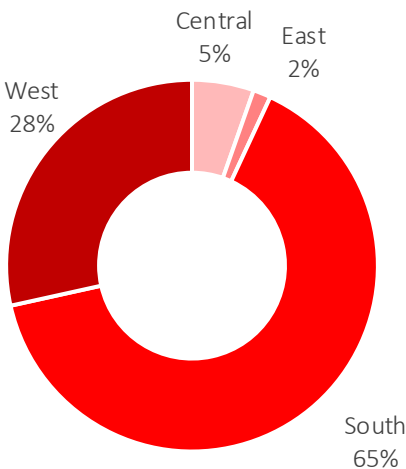
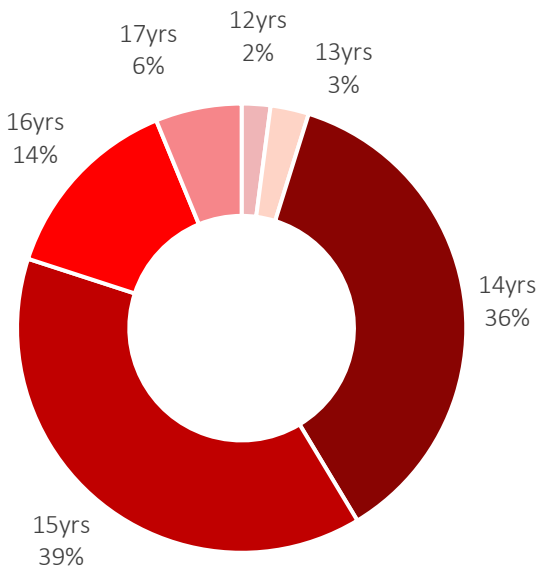
This quarter reinforced the importance of flexibility, structure, and peer-led learning when working in dynamic education settings. Revisiting existing projects proved to be an effective way to keep students engaged, allowing them to experience completion and pride even with irregular attendance. We also saw how powerful student leadership can be. Experienced participants supporting others not only reduced pressure on facilitators but strengthened group culture and confidence. Resource limitations encouraged us to streamline processes and improve efficiency, highlighting the need for clear systems around equipment use and care. Overall, the term showed that strong relationships, adaptability, and empowering rangatahi to take ownership of their learning are key to sustaining creative programmes in unpredictable environments.

CREATIVE PATHWAYS

SUMMARY



Participant stats: 146



CREATIVE PATHWAYS

IMAGES





NAVIGATORS

OVERVIEW

Navigators is a free weekly social program that responds to the growing need for communal spaces where young people can connect, reflect, and express themselves authentically. Through open check-ins, talanoa (group discussions) and creative practice, participants build trust, foster connection, and achieve personal growth, whilst sharing experiences, building self-awareness, and supporting one another in a non-judgemental environment. Creative sessions offer a healthy outlet for expression, helping young people process life experiences while developing confidence, identity, and a sense of belonging.

SOCIAL OUTCOMES



Strengthened sense of belonging and connection



Increased confidence and self-awareness



Improved emotional literacy and communication skills



Safe space for reflection and mental wellbeing

CREATIVE OUTCOMES



Development of creative skills and artistic confidence



Increased confidence and self-awareness



Access to professional networks & industry opportunities



Increased ability to work independently as artists



NAVIGATORS / NORTH



Facilitated by Rizvan Tu'itahi, Siose Solo & Tamzin Naicker

Report by Tamzin Naicker

Monday's, Shore Junction, Takapuna

This quarter, we spent time grounding ourselves as a group — reflecting on how far we've come, and shaping the kind of culture we want to carry into the final part of the year. Together, we refreshed our kawa, added new ideas from the whole rōpū, and posted it up so everyone can see the values we hold in this space. We also revisited the energy and learnings from our North Navigators Showcase at the end of last quarter, which sparked a strong creative direction moving forward. Creatively, we set a new goal: building a 2–3 track collaborative EP. Participants took the lead on production, creating two original beats and splitting into groups — some working in the studio with Rizvan while others began writing to the new instrumentals. The whole process became a chance for them to explore teamwork, take creative risks, and grow their confidence in a hands-on way.

HIGHLIGHTS

One of the biggest highs this quarter was hearing the young ones talk about how the showcase changed them — how performing boosted their confidence, how supported they felt, and how the Navigators culture genuinely lifts them up. Moments like that showed just how much pride and belonging they carry now. Our talanoa sessions were rich, with everyone contributing to refining the kawa and reflecting on what helps our space thrive. New participants joined and settled in quickly, adding to the momentum and sense of whanaungatanga. On the creative side, getting vocals down for the first two EP tracks felt like a real achievement — a milestone that showed both growth and commitment. Overall, the biggest highlight was watching participants step further into themselves: becoming braver, more collaborative, and more aware of the role they play in shaping the group.

CHALLENGES

Working with a younger cohort has meant navigating short attention spans and big energy, which can shift the vibe quickly. Our challenge has been guiding that energy in a way that keeps everyone engaged and respectful, especially during sharing moments. These aren't negative behaviours — just signs of a group learning how to sit with each other, listen, and contribute. With consistent guidance and reminders of our kawa, the group is steadily building those habits.

LEARNINGS

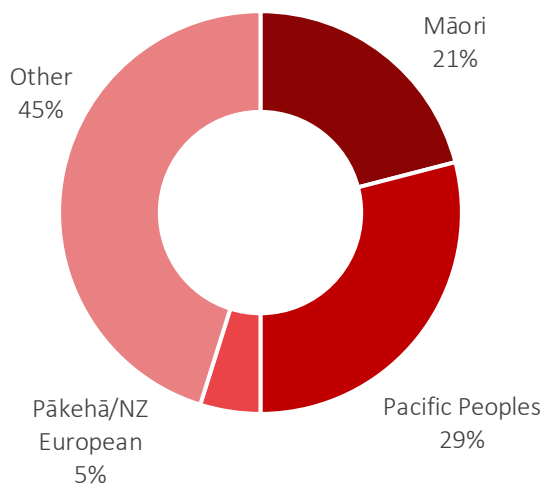
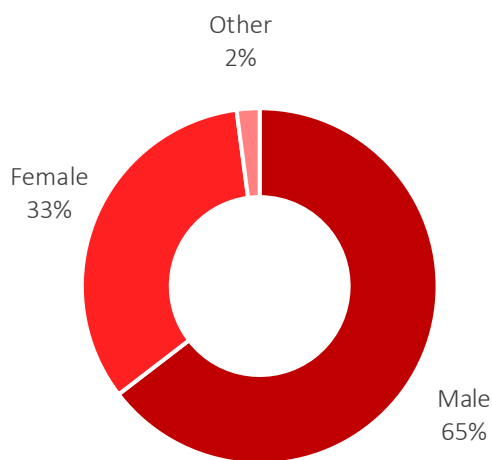
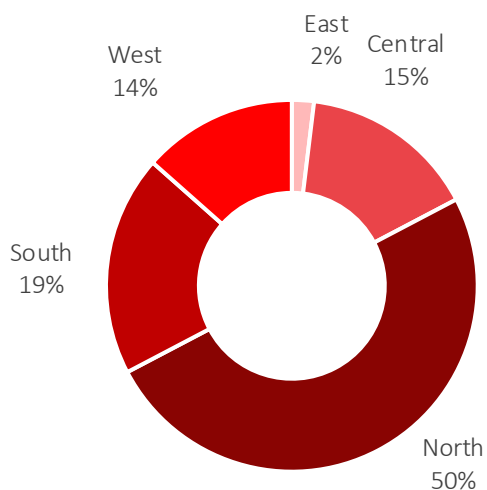
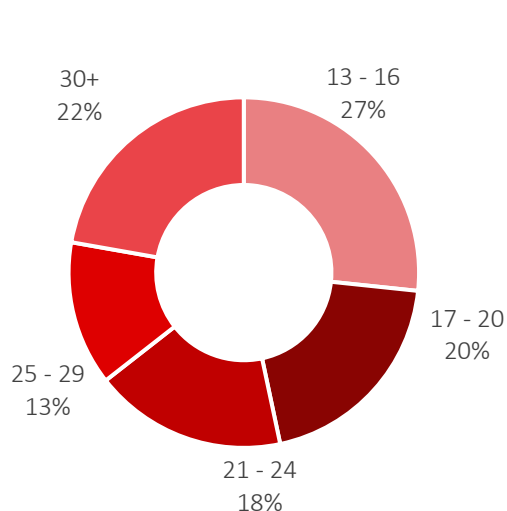
This quarter reminded us how important steady facilitation is, especially when working with a mix of ages and skill levels. Keeping everyone focused requires repetition, consistency, and clear routines. In the studio, we also learned that having lots of producers in the room can create excitement but also overwhelm the creative flow. Finding smoother ways to balance contributions — without dimming anyone's voice — will be key as we continue building the EP. Overall, the quarter reinforced that when structure and creativity sit together, the group thrives. North Navs is slowly finding its rhythm, and the confidence growing in these young people is already showing in the music they create and the way they carry themselves in the room.



NAVIGATORS / NORTH

SUMMARY

Participant stats: 48



NAVIGATORS / NORTH

IMAGES



NAVIGATORS / WEST



Facilitated by Elijah Manū, Aidan Fine & Bronson Price

Report by Elijah Manū

Tuesday's, Zeal West, Henderson

This quarter, West Navigators continued to grow in both numbers and energy. With such an active group, we made full use of the different spaces at Zeal to keep things flowing. One room became a dedicated recording space where participants worked steadily on their projects. Another turned into a live jam and freestyle space with instruments and a PA, giving young people the chance to experiment, collaborate, and build confidence in a live setting. A third room held the more relaxed side of West Navigators — a hangout space where talanoa, deeper kōrero, and peer support naturally unfolded. This setup allowed us to hold space for a larger group while still keeping the experience personal, creative, and grounded. Over the quarter, friendships deepened, collaborations took off, and several participants released new projects — including a collaborative album and an EP made with other Navigators.

HIGHLIGHTS

West Navigators hit a new stride this quarter, with some of the most consistent and high-energy attendance we've ever seen. The space was alive each week — buzzing with music, movement, and the kind of connection that makes young people want to keep showing up. That momentum created a culture participants are proud to be part of. “West Navs” has grown into a genuine creative identity, not just a weekly programme. We also saw our group diversify in age, background, and creative style, which only strengthened the kaupapa. Many participants levelled up socially as much as creatively — collaborating outside of scheduled sessions, performing at each other's gigs, supporting releases, and encouraging each other's growth. The way they've begun forming their own networks shows how powerful the social fabric of the programme has become.

CHALLENGES

With the programme growing steadily, space has become one of our main challenges. On weeks when the live jam room was booked for another group, we had to condense everyone into two rooms — which made sessions feel full and sometimes limited the space each participant had to work comfortably. We also had ongoing heat issues across the rooms at Zeal and with the number of people attending, sessions could get quite warm. None of these challenges stopped the programme from running well, but they did remind us how important the environment is when working with high-energy creative groups.

LEARNINGS

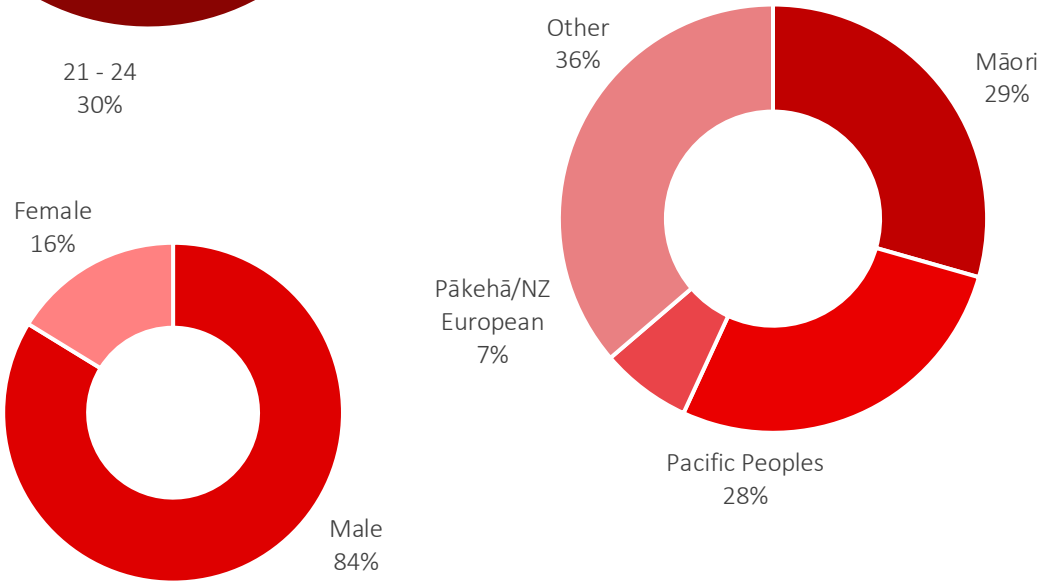
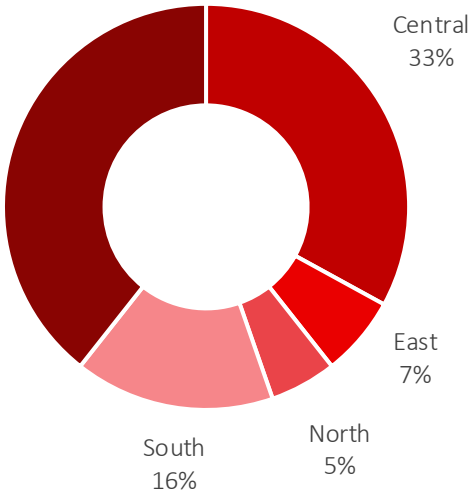
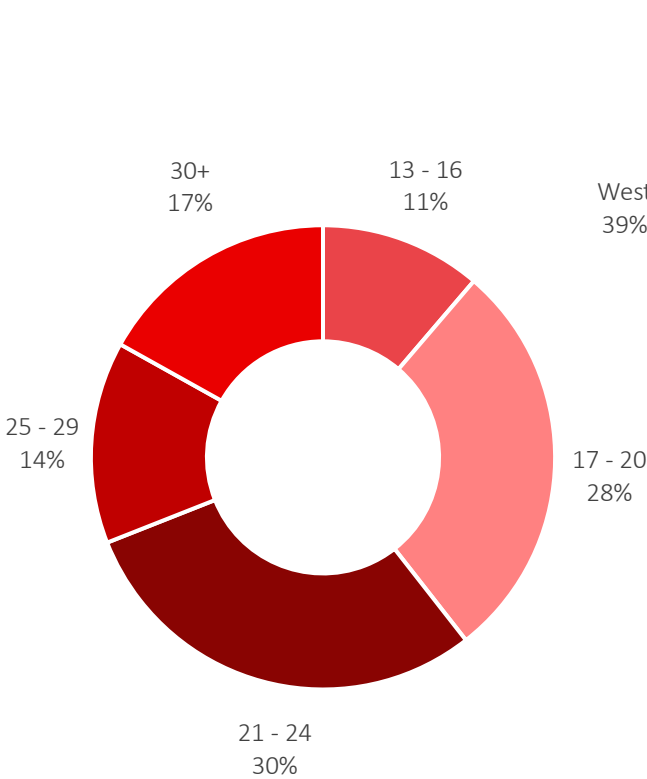
This quarter showed clearly that the culture of West Navigators is what drives the programme forward. A strong sense of belonging has kept engagement high and encouraged participants to return week after week. We also learned that having access to multiple spaces at Zeal makes a huge difference. Recording, jamming, freestyling, and informal connection all serve different needs — and together, they keep the programme dynamic and responsive to how young people naturally move. Most importantly, the social ecosystem at West has become just as valuable as the creative one. The friendships, collaborations, and peer networks forming here are leading to growth far beyond the room — from new music releases to opportunities in the wider community. The more we nurture that environment, the more the young people rise.

NAVIGATORS / WEST

SUMMARY

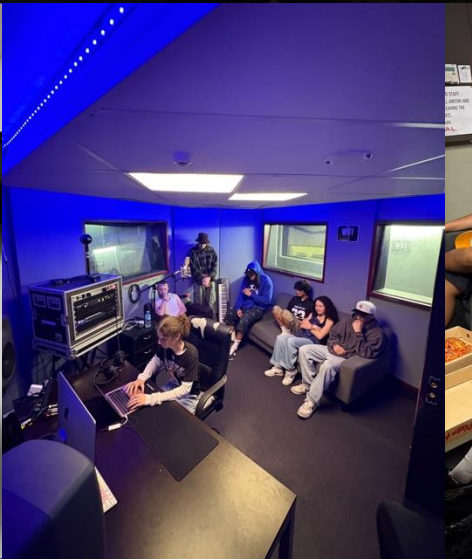


Participant stats: 80



NAVIGATORS / WEST

IMAGES



NAVIGATORS / WAHINE



Facilitated by TK White, Hariata Makiha & Tamzin Naicker

Report by Hariata Makiha

Tuesday's, Wesley Community Centre, Mt Roskill

Moving from winter into spring, Wāhine Navigators entered a season where participants were juggling some of their busiest months — exams, gigs, travel, personal milestones, and celebrating each other's wins. Even with this pressure, we saw participants stepping into new spaces with confidence, taking opportunities that once felt out of reach and leaning into their growth outside the program. Alongside moments of burnout, sickness, and shifting energy, our participants showed real resilience, returning whenever they could and supporting one another through the highs and lows. A major moment this quarter was hosting a screening of a documentary series featuring our facilitator TK White, which explored her journey as an indigenous wahine in community work and highlighted Wāhine Navigators as a core part of her healing and leadership. It became a meaningful reminder of how powerful this space is, not just creatively, but personally and collectively.

HIGHLIGHTS

One of the biggest highs this quarter was the depth of connection that formed in our smaller sessions. With fewer people in the room at times, participants opened up in ways that don't always happen in larger groups — sharing more of their stories, values, and vulnerabilities. This shift revealed a stronger sense of trust and brought a new level of honesty to our kōrero. The documentary screening was an especially powerful moment for the group. Participants were deeply moved and many saw parts of themselves reflected in TK's story. Several participants shared that it gave them a newfound respect for their facilitator. That connection has strengthened their sense of belonging and desire to return, learn, and grow in the space. We also welcomed new participants who, as always, settled in effortlessly, sharing openly, forming friendships quickly, and contributing to the warmth of the group. One of the clear highlights of Wāhine Navigators is seeing relationships extend beyond the program, with participants collaborating on gigs, supporting each other's milestones, and celebrating life together.

CHALLENGES

This was a quieter quarter for Wāhine Navigators, with many participants balancing heavy commitments — exams, work, study, parenting, and travel. Attendance naturally fluctuated, and the energy in the room shifted week to week as participants navigated full lives and occasional sickness. The challenge was holding space that still felt meaningful, even when numbers were low or people were stretched thin. What grounded us was the ongoing connection outside the room; despite absences, the group stayed engaged through our chats, supporting one another and maintaining a sense of continuity. It highlighted the importance of flexibility and reminded us that consistency in community can show up in many forms, not just physical presence.

LEARNINGS

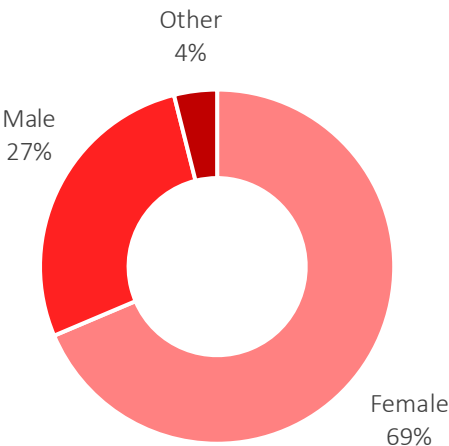
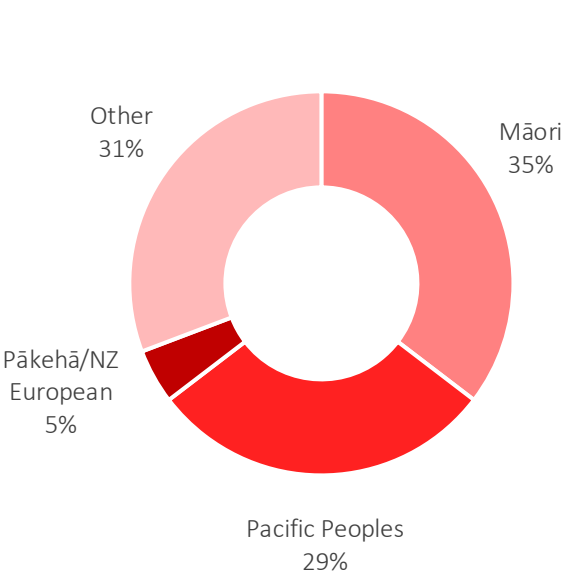
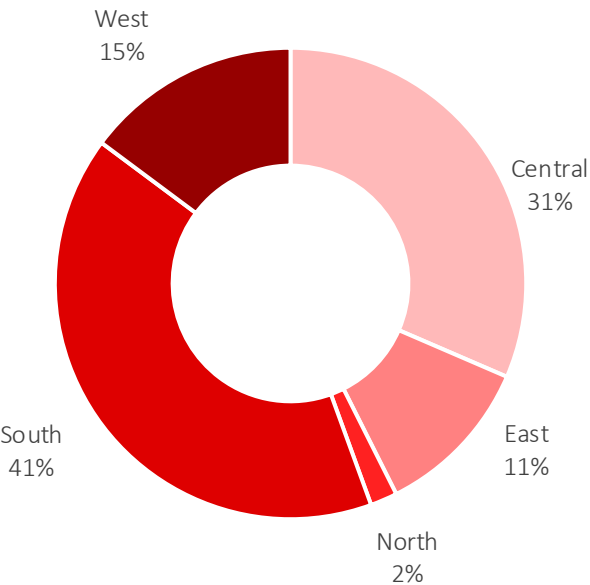
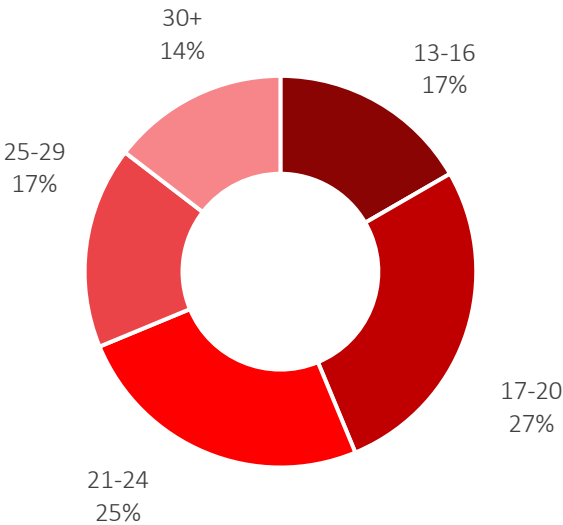
This quarter reinforced that Wāhine Navigators is fundamentally a space built on connection. Participants come not just to create, but to decompress, to talk through things they may not share anywhere else, and to feel held by a community that understands them. The fluctuating group sizes (sometimes intimate, sometimes full) taught us that the strength of the space doesn't depend on numbers, but on the kawa and values we uphold each week. Whether the room is quiet or buzzing, the way participants support one another, inside and outside the program, remains consistent. This quarter reminded us that our kaupapa is carried in our relationships, and that the culture of safety, trust, and openness continues to deepen regardless of scale.

NAVIGATORS / WAHINE

SUMMARY



Participant stats: 51



NAVIGATORS / WAHINE

IMAGES



NAVIGATORS / CENTRAL



Facilitated by Elijah Manū, Aidan Fine, Bronson Price & Dera Meelan

Report by Aidan Fine

Wednesday's, Wesley Community Centre, Mt Roskill

Over the past quarter, Central Navigators has continued to offer a steady, supportive space for young artists to connect, create, and grow. Our structure of dividing participants into three booths to collaborate on a single track — guided by prompts and creative challenges — has remained a reliable anchor for the sessions. We've also added a new PA system to the space at Wesley Community Centre, giving participants the chance to practice mic etiquette, rehearse live sets, and hear their work in a performance-ready environment. Alongside the creative work, the quarter was marked by genuine relationship-building, with friendships and collaborations forming inside and outside the program. A standout moment was a visit from Raiza Biza, one of the original Navigators facilitators, whose presence brought inspiration and a sense of legacy to the group.

HIGHLIGHTS

This quarter brought steady, meaningful growth for Central Navigators, with a consistent core group committing to weekly sessions. The smaller cohort size actually strengthened the program — giving participants more space to refine their songs, explore new ideas, and receive individualised feedback from facilitators. The introduction of the new PA system immediately elevated the room, allowing participants to rehearse live sets, test their mixes, and build stage confidence in a supportive environment. We've seen impressive development from several regulars who are showing up each week with sharper writing, stronger vocal delivery, and a growing sense of creative identity. There's also been a healthy crossover with West Navigators, with several young people attending both programs because they value the different atmosphere and the tailored support they receive at Central. The visit from Raiza Biza was a major highlight, grounding the group in the history of Navigators and offering inspiration that carried through the rest of the quarter.

CHALLENGES

This quarter brought a few small logistical considerations as we continued to shape the environment to best support creativity and focus. With more activity happening across the centre, we occasionally needed to manage sound spill between spaces and adjust how we structured the program to keep the flow balanced. The more intimate cohort size some weeks meant facilitators were a bit more hands-on in guiding momentum week to week, ensuring each session stayed engaging and productive. These insights have helped us refine how we set up and use the space so that participants get the most out of every visit.

LEARNINGS

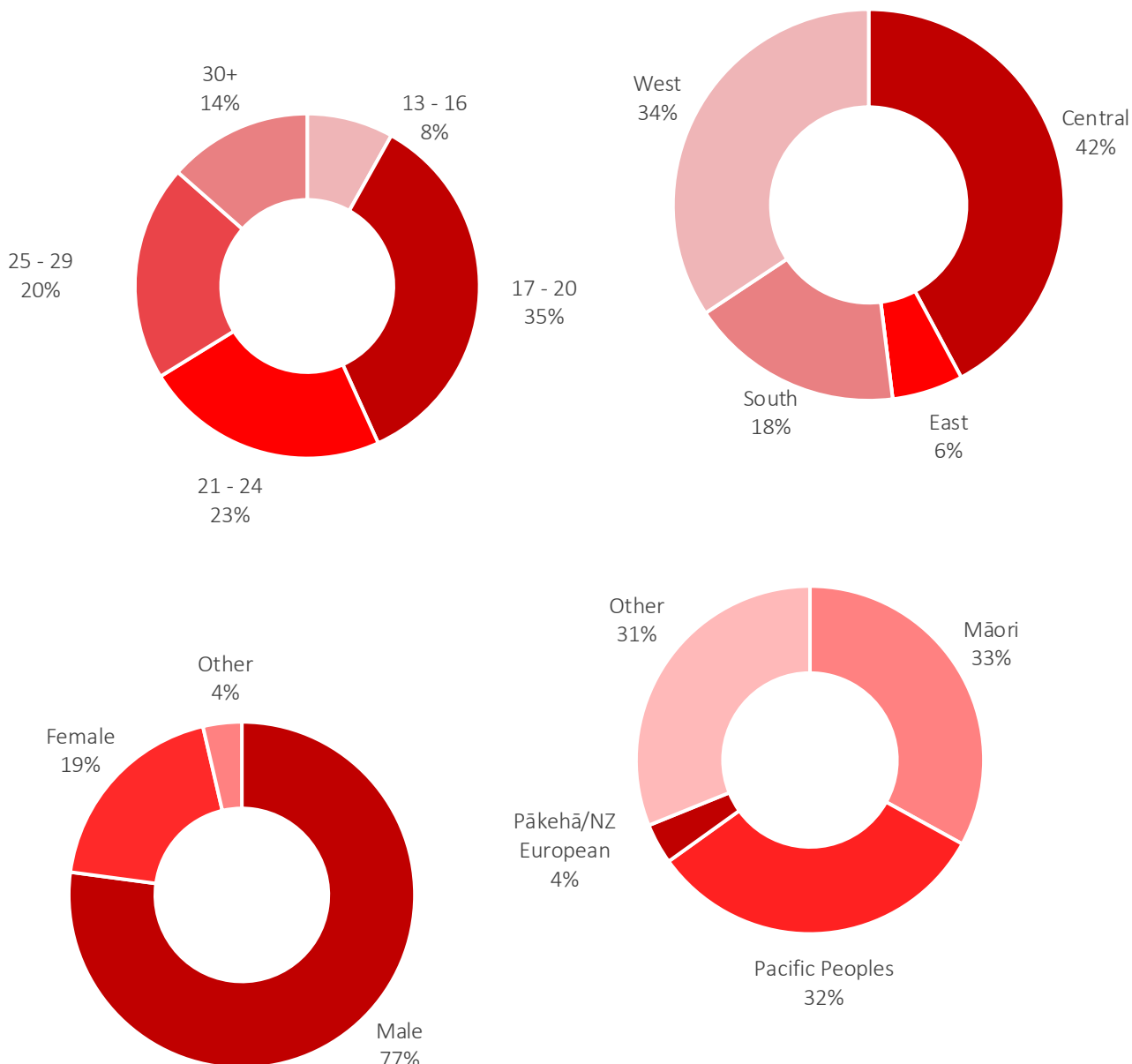
This quarter reinforced that Central Navigators thrives when sessions are shaped around the strengths and pace of the group. The more intimate cohorts allowed for deeper creative focus, richer kōrero, and meaningful one-on-one development, showing that impact is driven by the quality of engagement rather than the size of the room. We also gained a clearer understanding of how participants choose spaces that best support their growth, with Central offering a calm, reflective environment where young artists can experiment, build confidence, and receive tailored support.



NAVIGATORS / CENTRAL

SUMMARY

Participant stats: **83**



NAVIGATORS / CENTRAL

IMAGES



NAVIGATORS / SOUTH



Facilitated by Oliva Luki, Ben Tuimaseve, Lincoln Keepa & Noah Tauti

Report by Noah Tauti

Monday's, OMAC, Ōtara

This quarter, we leaned into the growing diversity of skills within the group by splitting creative time into two streams — one for beat makers and producers, and the other for lyricists and songwriters. Many participants were turning up wanting to explore the production side more deeply, so having facilitators who could support both pathways worked really well. We also recorded several creative outcomes, adding to our growing vault of South Navigators music. The group is starting to think intentionally about how to share their work with the wider world — ideas like curating a South Navigators EP or holding a live showcase early next year are already on the table. It's been exciting to see participants thinking about the bigger picture of their creative journeys.

HIGHLIGHTS

Splitting the producers and songwriters was a huge win. It allowed participants to receive focused support on the areas they were genuinely passionate about — whether that was crafting beats from scratch or strengthening their writing and performance. One of the strongest highlights was the rise in organic collaboration. Participants began linking up naturally during creative time, offering ideas, sharing skills, and jumping into each other's tracks without hesitation. The ease of these collaborations speaks to the trust and culture the group has built together. South Navigators continues to be a place where young people feel confident exploring new creative territory while being held by the collective.

CHALLENGES

This quarter didn't bring any major challenges, but we did notice natural fluctuations in attendance as young people moved through a busy season of exams, work, whānau commitments, and end-of-year pressures. Even when numbers shifted week to week, the group stayed connected, and those who came through were fully engaged. The flow simply reflected where our young people were at in their lives, and the space continued to hold steady for whoever needed it.

LEARNINGS

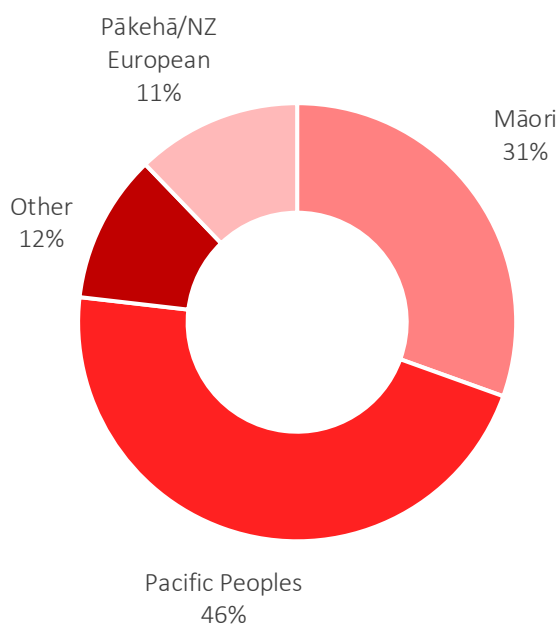
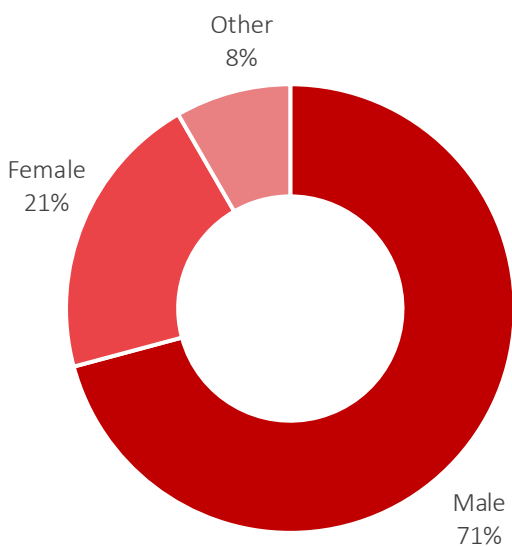
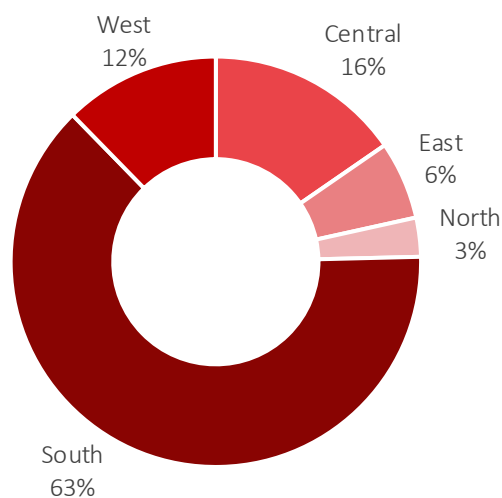
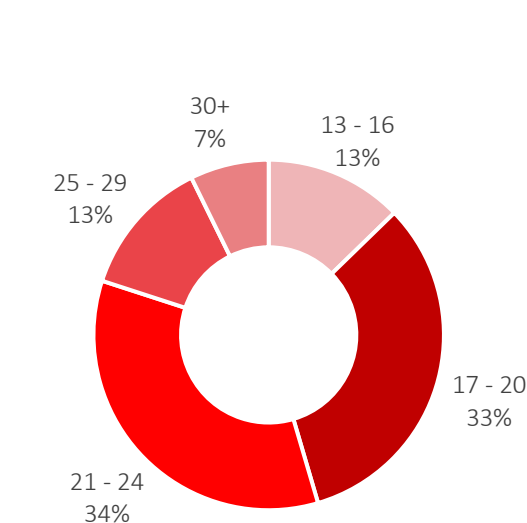
This quarter confirmed that splitting the room based on participant focus allows us to support far more young people at once — and at a deeper level. When participants get to choose the creative stream that aligns with their interests, their engagement skyrockets and the quality of their work lifts too. We also saw how this approach could be mirrored in talanoa: creating space for different types of kōrero depending on the energy in the room, and meeting participants where they're at. Overall, the quarter reinforced that flexibility — guided by what participants actually want to explore — is what keeps South Navigators thriving.



NAVIGATORS / SOUTH

SUMMARY

Participant stats: 62



NAVIGATORS / SOUTH

IMAGES



NAVIGATORS / SPOKEN WORD



Facilitated by Noah Tauti, Luani Nansen & Jesse Gibson

Report by Luani Nansen

Wednesday's, OMAC, Ōtara

This quarter marked the end of our second year of running Spoken Word Navigators, and the quarter moved quickly in a way that reflects how established, fluid, and meaningful the space has become. To expand their experience beyond the program, we held two offsite sessions that showcased different sides of spoken word. The first was attending Zech Soakai's book launch, *For All We Know*, which offered a powerful look at poetry as a published artform and a community celebration. For many, it was their first time seeing poetry expressed in this way. Our second outing was to Action Education's "He Reo Rangatahi Slam", where young performers led the space with uplifting, high-level work. Being in a room where young people held the mic so confidently was inspiring for our group, reinforcing that spoken word continues to grow — and that they are part of a wider movement.

HIGHLIGHTS

One of the strongest highlights this quarter was seeing how much the group has grown together — facilitators and participants alike. Spoken Word Navigators has now moved confidently into its second year, and the energy in the space reflects that maturity. Participants consistently spoke about how the low-pressure, non-committal nature of the program has helped them open up, write more honestly, and share with greater confidence. Our ongoing relationship with the Tupu Youth Library whānau continues to be a huge asset, with their steady weekly presence shaping the welcoming, grounded vibe of the room. In our final reflective session, many acknowledged how much they've changed — not just in their writing, but in their ability to hold space for others, speak their truth, and show up authentically. For us as facilitators, it affirmed that we're learning alongside them, and that the kaupapa of Spoken Word Navigators is landing in the way it was always intended: gently, meaningfully, and with genuine community at its centre.

CHALLENGES

This quarter brought very few challenges within the Spoken Word Navigators space, largely because the kaupapa is intentionally calm, participant-led, and grounded in trust. The main challenge was simply keeping our talanoa topics fresh. The conversations often flowed naturally from week to week, which showed depth and continuity, but also meant facilitators needed to work a little harder to introduce new prompts that still felt meaningful and relevant. Overall, the challenge sat more in maintaining variety than managing issues in the space.

LEARNINGS

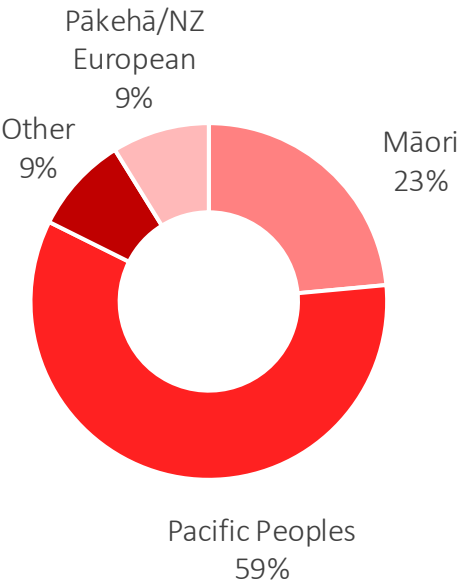
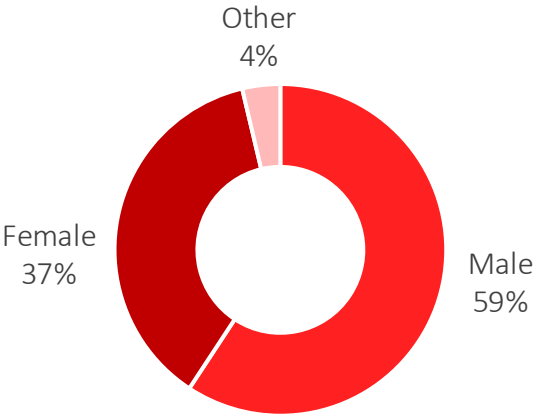
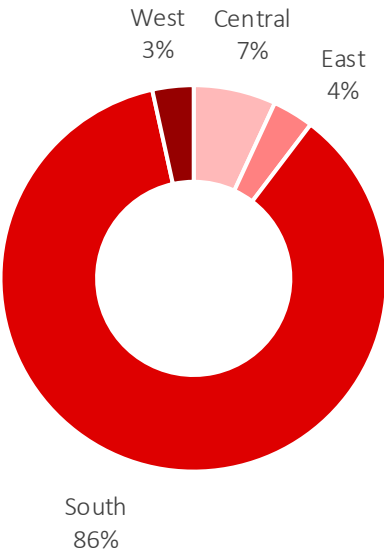
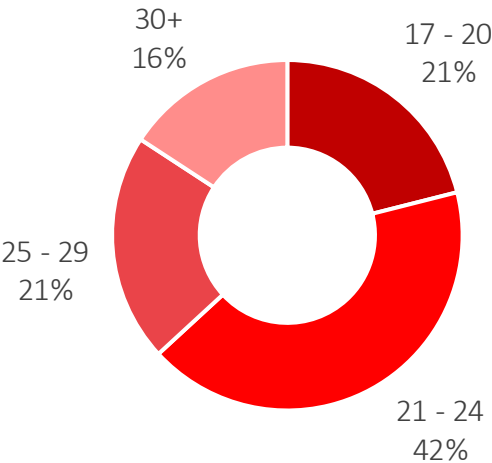
This quarter reinforced how powerful a low-pressure, participant-led space can be. We saw that when everyone — facilitators and participants alike — shares the floor as equals, the learning deepens. Different writing styles, worldviews, and creative approaches sparked new ideas every week, reminding us that Spoken Word Navs thrives on collective wisdom rather than expertise. We also learned that continuity in kōrero is not a limitation but a sign of trust; when talanoa naturally rolls from one session to the next, it shows that people feel safe enough to return to unfinished thoughts. Most importantly, this quarter confirmed that growth in this space isn't measured by technical skill alone, but by confidence, vulnerability, and the willingness to contribute to something bigger than yourself.

NAVIGATORS / SPOKEN WORD

SUMMARY



Participant stats: 23



NAVIGATORS / SPOKEN WORD

IMAGES





TALANOA TUESDAYS

OVERVIEW

Talanoa Tuesdays is a weekly, communal dialogue initiative that provides a culturally grounded space for honest conversation, reflection, and collective growth. Rooted in the Pasifika practice of Talanoa, it offers a rare environment where people can explore personal experiences and worldviews that are often difficult to express in other settings. By creating a safe and dignified forum for open dialogue, Talanoa Tuesdays strengthens emotional wellbeing, mental health, builds social connection, and fosters a sense of belonging across diverse communities and generations.

SOCIAL OUTCOMES



Increased emotional self-awareness through guided communal dialogue



Strengthened sense of connection and belonging across diverse communities



Greater capacity to reflect on life challenges and navigate them with dignity



Access to a consistent, culturally grounded space that fosters trust and connection

WELLBEING OUTCOMES



Improved ability to process personal experiences in a safe and supportive environment



Increased sense of safety and dignity when exploring personal or sensitive issues



Strengthened emotional resilience through shared reflection and collective care



Enhanced overall mental and emotional wellbeing through regular, meaningful dialogue





CREATIVE LABS

OVERVIEW

Creative Labs provides free access to high-quality music spaces, creative resources, and mentoring for young people—particularly those facing adversity—so they can develop their skills in a safe, supportive environment. Participants receive hands-on guidance from experienced producers and musicians, as well as opportunities to learn the technical skills needed to work independently. The program has become a pivotal launchpad for many emerging artists, helping them create and release original music, build confidence, and take meaningful steps toward future opportunities in the creative industries.

PERSONAL OUTCOMES



Strengthened sense of identity and personal agency through music creation



Increased confidence and self-expression through supported creative practice

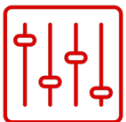


Development of resilience and perseverance through independent studio use



Access to a safe, inclusive space that fosters belonging and personal growth

PROFESSIONAL OUTCOMES



Growth in technical music production, recording, and creative industry skills



Creation and release of original works that build artistic portfolios



Experience using high-quality equipment and software independently



Increased readiness to pursue performance, recording, and industry opportunities



CREATIVE LABS / CENTRAL



Facilitated by Dera Meelan & Aidan Fine

Report by Dera Meelan

Weds, Thurs, Wesley Community Centre, Sandringham

Creative Labs continued to operate as a consistent hub for young artists to access free studio time, develop their skills, and work on personal projects at their own pace. This quarter, we introduced a new booking system—limiting sessions to a maximum of two hours—to ensure fair access for everyone, especially with the programme now running across only two days each week. Participants adapted well to the change, and the higher turnover meant more young people were able to utilise the space. Facilitators remained available throughout each session to support recording, offer guidance, troubleshoot technical issues, and help participants move their creative ideas forward.

HIGHLIGHTS

This quarter brought a wave of impressive creative output, with several participants completing full Eps and many others finishing tracks now ready for release. Watching this level of progression has been a genuine highlight. It reflects how the balance of supported studio time, growing independence, and reliable access to quality equipment is helping young artists take tangible steps forward in their creative journeys.

CHALLENGES

The main challenge this quarter has been meeting the growing demand for studio time. With only two days available each week, many participants have expressed interest in having additional days—particularly Mondays—return to the schedule. While the current structure is working well, the enthusiasm for more access highlights just how valued the space has become.

LEARNINGS

This quarter reaffirmed the value of giving participants creative independence while staying close enough to support them when needed. We saw that stepping back—rather than guiding every step—helped artists grow in confidence, problem-solving, and technical ability at a much faster pace. The studio continues to show that young people thrive when they're trusted to lead their own process, with facilitators providing reassurance and expertise at the right moments.

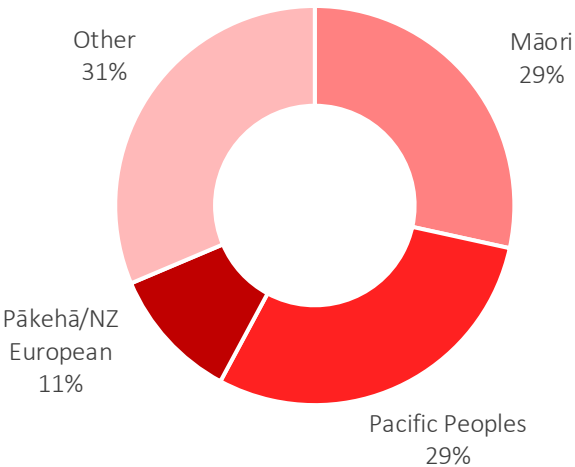
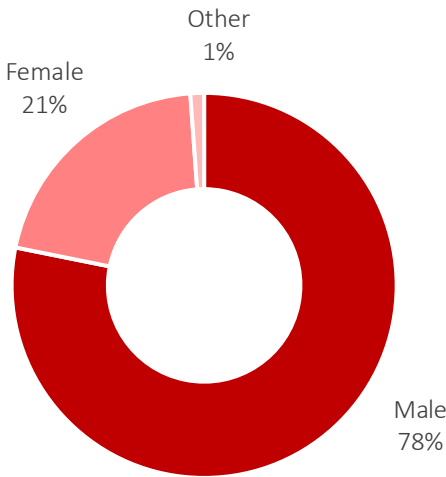
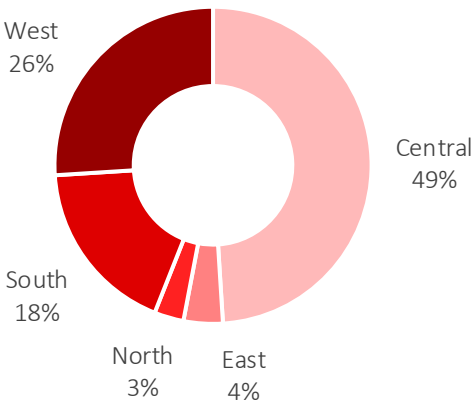
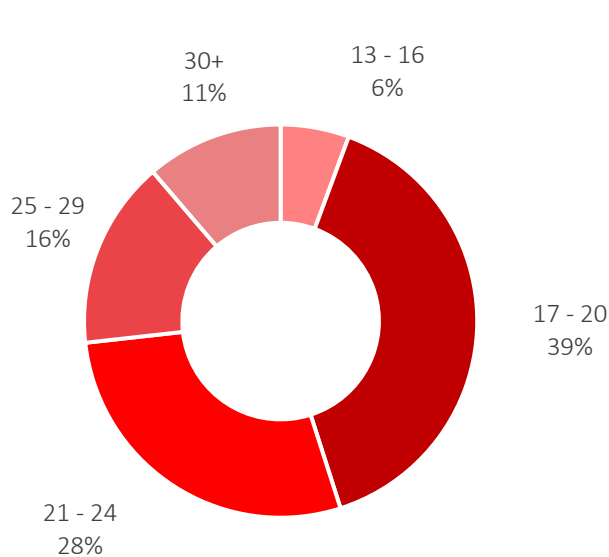


CREATIVE LABS / CENTRAL

SUMMARY



Participant stats: 87



CREATIVE LABS / CENTRAL

IMAGES



CREATIVE LABS / SOUTH



Facilitated by Oliva Luki

Report by Oliva Luki

Mon, Tues & Weds, OMAC, Ōtara

This quarter brought a shift in how Creative Labs South operated, with the main studio temporarily unavailable. We moved into a smaller recording booth and adapted quickly by bringing in our own equipment to keep sessions flowing. Without access to a portable speaker, all recording and playback were done through headphones — a change in workflow, but one that still allowed participants to create, experiment, and stay productive. The flexibility shown by both artists and facilitators helped maintain a strong creative rhythm throughout the quarter.

HIGHLIGHTS

Despite the shift in setup, participants stayed motivated and continued showing up with the same hunger to create. The adaptability paid off — around five tracks were released this quarter, and more than thirty demos were recorded and developed within the booth. Even with the limitations of headphone-based recording, the momentum never slowed, and participants still produced strong work. We also introduced dedicated beat-making Tuesdays, which quickly became a favourite. Producers used the space to learn from each other, follow tutorials, and build their sound alongside peers. Several participants made noticeable progress, including two who began as complete beginners and have now found genuine confidence and enjoyment in producing.

CHALLENGES

The sudden shift from the main studio into the smaller recording booth affected bookings this quarter. Some participants were hesitant to come in once they realised the setup had changed, especially after previously experiencing the full studio environment. This made scheduling more unpredictable and led to a higher number of late cancellations or no-shows. Because studio time is a valuable resource — and often the first real introduction to what professional environments feel like — we had to reinforce expectations around commitment and follow-through. Adjusting the booking system to manage this more fairly has been an ongoing task.

LEARNINGS

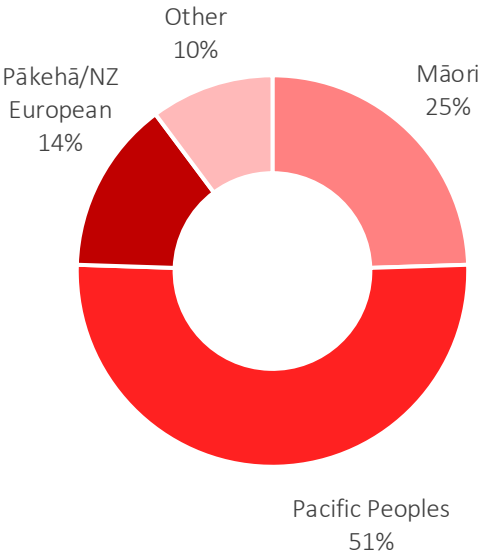
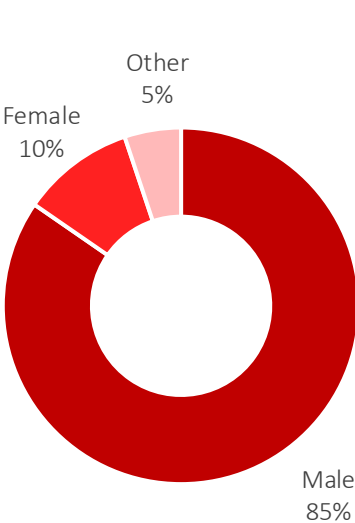
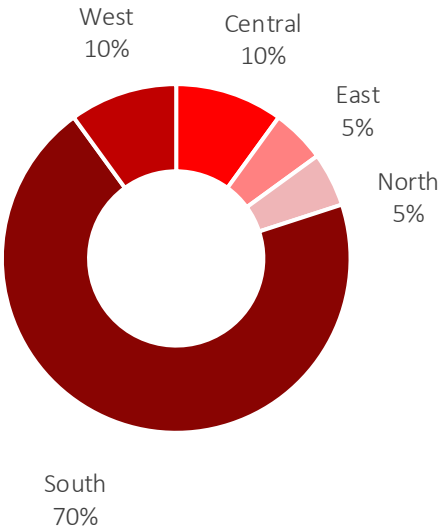
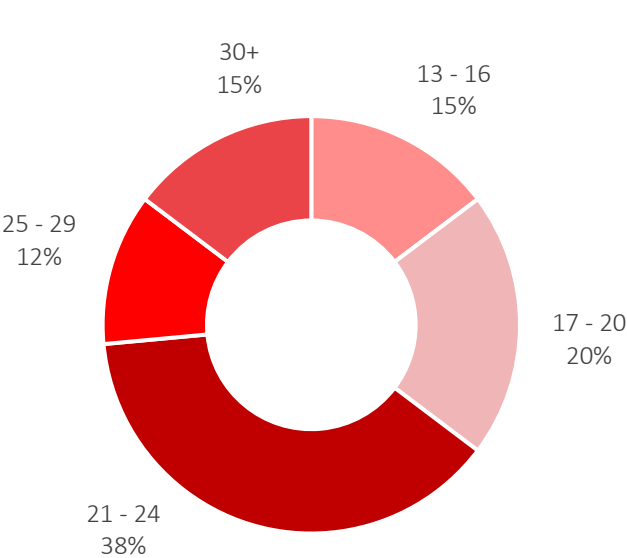
This quarter reinforced that the strength of Creative Labs South isn't defined by the equipment or environment — it's the relationships. Even without the full studio setup, participants kept showing up because they value the support, guidance, and encouragement built into the space. Many came through simply to share works-in-progress, ask for feedback, or get advice on tracks they'd been developing independently. The consistency of relationship-building has become one of the core drivers of engagement, showing that a trusted facilitator presence can hold the space just as powerfully as any piece of gear.

CREATIVE LABS / SOUTH

SUMMARY



Participant stats: 38



CREATIVE LABS / SOUTH

IMAGES





BRIDGE THE GAP

OVERVIEW

Bridge The Gap is an intensive creative development program that guides young emerging creative entrepreneurs through a transformative, hands-on learning journey. Over three months, participants produce, and publicly release an original body of work, while learning every stage of the process – from production and digital distribution to content creation, identifying potential revenue streams, promotion, and merchandise development. The program empowers young people with creative passions to gain practical, transferable skills and real-world experience, supporting their growth as independent and confident creative leaders, capable of shaping their own pathways.

CREATIVE OUTCOMES



Full end-to-end experience in music production, release, and promotion



Growth in entrepreneurial and creative industry skills



Development of branding, content creation, and merchandise capabilities



Increased ability to lead and manage creative projects independently

PROFESSIONAL OUTCOMES



Access to professional networks and industry opportunities



Paid performance, work & experience within the industry



Development of skills for future creative or business ventures



Increased readiness to sustain creative careers beyond the program





BRIDGE THE GAP

Facilitated by Oliva Luki

Report by Oliva Luki

This intake of Bridge The Gap had a real spark to it. We recorded two full EPs from start to finish, working out of a private studio setup so participants could have more flexibility and uninterrupted creative time. Each project moved through the entire music making and launching process — beat selection, recording, sequencing, release planning, professional PR guidance, media training with radio interviews (at Niu FM and bFM), and finally designing and producing their own merch, including CDs and T-shirts. To wrap it all up, we organised their headline show, giving them a full end-to-end experience of what it takes to build, release, and celebrate a complete body of work.

HIGHLIGHTS

The biggest highlight was watching how fully invested the participants became. They showed up every week, locked in for three-hour sessions, and chipped away at their projects with real commitment. Seeing them take our guidance on board, trust the process, and gain confidence in their own sound was huge. Another standout moment was recognising how much pride they felt once they understood the amount of mahi that goes into creating a full project — from early demos through to polished releases. And the release show was massive. Over 100 people came through, the room was buzzing, and for all three participants it was their first time headlining their own event. The atmosphere, the crowd response, and the sense of achievement made it a defining moment for the cohort.

CHALLENGES

This intake reminded us that participants move at different paces depending on where they are in their personal lives and creative journeys. Some needed more time and support to build consistency or confidence, while others were ready to jump straight into the deep end. Instead of seeing this as a setback, it showed us the importance of meeting each participant where they're at — encouraging them, supporting their capacity, and ensuring the program remains accessible without pressure. At times, scheduling or momentum shifts meant we needed to adjust our workflow, but the projects continued progressing steadily, and the final outcomes reflected strong commitment from the whole group.

LEARNINGS

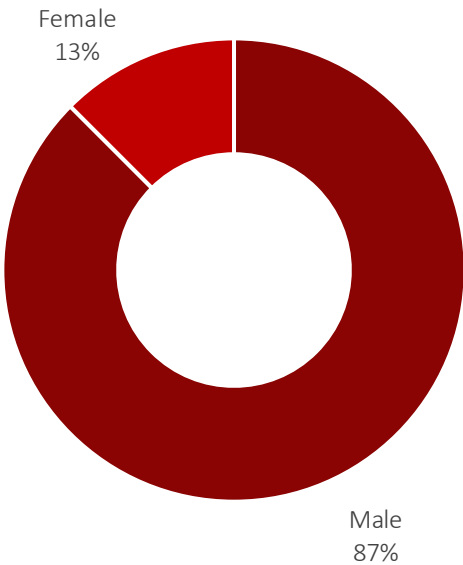
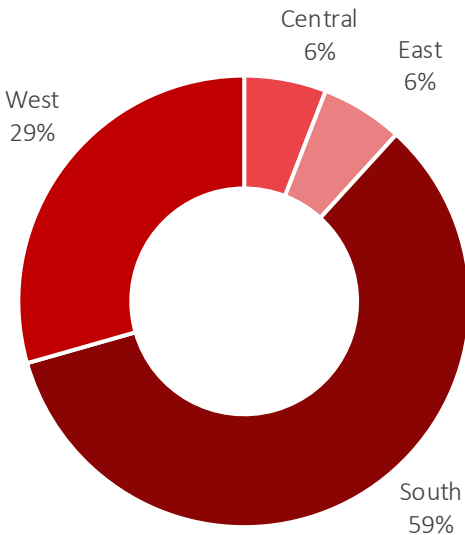
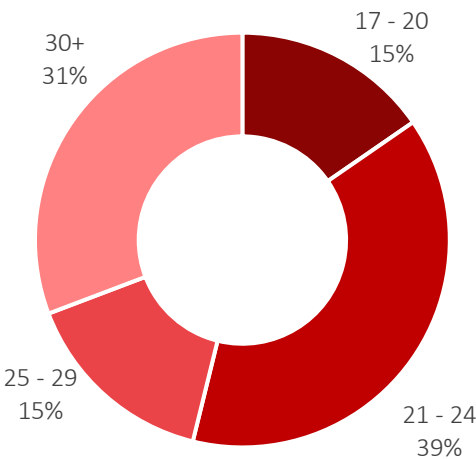
A key learning this quarter was the value of building solid relationships early. The participants who had prior rapport or familiarity with the facilitator tended to move through the process more smoothly, simply because trust was already established. We also learned how important it is to support young artists as they shift from “learning” to “doing.” This intake made significant strides — releasing music, performing live, navigating PR, media training, and understanding the full creative cycle — and their willingness to take those steps showed how effective consistent mentoring and encouragement can be. Most of all, this round reinforced that belief grows with experience. Once participants saw what they were capable of, their confidence followed.

BRIDGE THE GAP

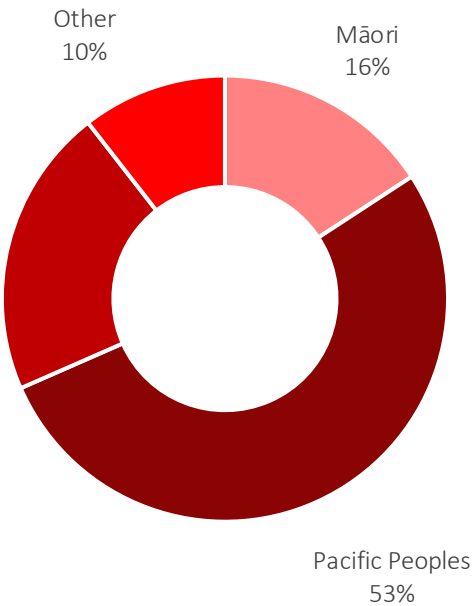


SUMMARY

Participant stats: 16



Pākehā/NZ
European
21%



BRIDGE THE GAP

IMAGES





EVENTS

OVERVIEW

Events provide powerful opportunities for young people to build confidence, showcase their talents, and gain real-world experience across all aspects of live performance and event delivery. Through performances, collaborations, and behind-the-scenes roles such as DJing, MCing, stage management, and content capture, participants are supported to step into new spaces, grow their skills, and discover their potential. These events are designed not just as creative platforms, but as spaces that uplift participants' mana, strengthen their sense of belonging, and open pathways toward future opportunities in the creative industries and beyond.

PERSONAL OUTCOMES



Increased confidence and stage presence through live performance



Strengthened sense of belonging and pride through public creative expression



Growth in leadership and teamwork through active involvement in event delivery



Opportunities to discover personal strengths and interests in a real-world setting

PROFESSIONAL OUTCOMES



Exposure to live industry environments and potential paid opportunities



Hands-on experience across performance, hosting, DJing, stage management, and event production



Increased readiness to plan, lead, or contribute to future creative events



Development of transferable skills in communication, organisation, and professionalism



Facilitated by Oliva Luki, Luani Nansen & TK White

Report by TK White

Thursday's fortnightly, The Button Factory, Auckland Central

Dojo is our youth creative hub in Auckland Central, based at The Button Factory. This quarter, the space evolved in a really organic way, led by what participants wanted and needed from it. Rather than focusing on structured workshops, Dojo became a platform for young people to step into leadership by designing and running their own events. Across the quarter, we hosted six major events, including a Navigators showcase where most performers were under 16, an open mic night, an album launch by a 17-year-old producer, a show with an all-participant lineup, the Bridge The Gap release event, and an all-female lineup with a special guest. Each event offered different opportunities for young people to perform, lead, and gain real-world experience in a supportive environment. Alongside this, Dojo also became a space for skills development behind the scenes. One of our facilitators — a former participant and current Dojo DJ — began shadowing one of Aotearoa's leading live sound engineers, gaining hands-on experience in live sound and technical production. This learning has been directly applied within Dojo events, strengthening both delivery and pathways into the events sector.

HIGHLIGHTS

The biggest highlight this quarter was the clear shift toward participant-led events. Watching young people step up, take ownership, and lead from the front was incredibly powerful. These events drew strong turnouts and created moments where participants truly thrived — not just as artists, but as organisers, hosts, and leaders. One standout moment was the album launch by a 17-year-old participant. She organised the full event — from curating the lineup and preparing speeches for each performer, to creating a slideshow, producing her own CDs, and bringing her whānau along for support. The night was a huge success, and her project later charted at #6 on the NZ music charts. Beyond the achievement itself, the impact was in what it sparked: other participants began to see what was possible for themselves and started asking how they could do something similar. Another key highlight was seeing facilitator growth mirror participant growth. Our young DJ and facilitator stepping into live sound engineering has opened a new career pathway for him within the events industry. Watching someone move from participant, to facilitator, to technical professional within the same ecosystem reinforced the long-term impact of Dojo as a space for both creative and vocational development. The Navigators showcase was another major high. For many of the young performers, it was their first time on stage in front of an audience. They walked away buzzing with confidence, pride, and a sense of accomplishment that stayed with them for weeks.

CHALLENGES

One of the ongoing challenges this quarter was audience engagement across different event formats. Through trial and reflection, we noticed that events centred around personal milestones — like album launches or first-time performances — naturally drew more energy and connection than more traditional live music formats. This highlighted how important context and meaning are when inviting people into a space, especially for emerging artists.

LEARNINGS

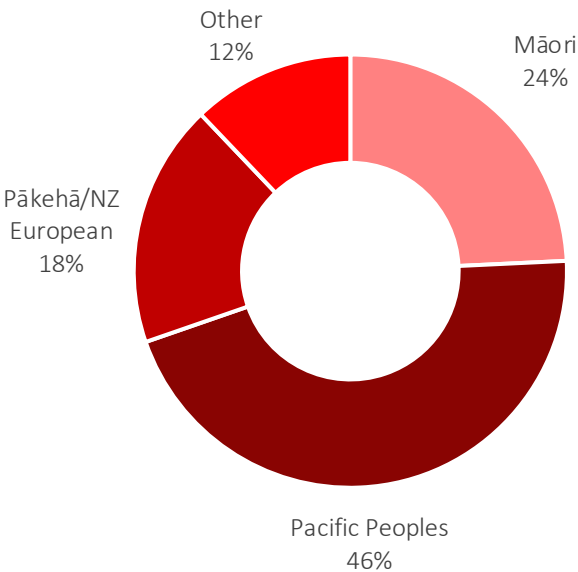
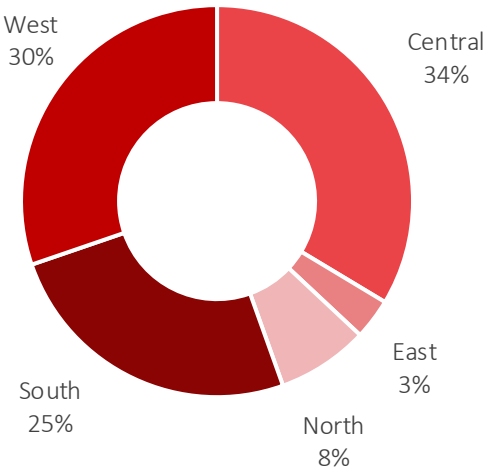
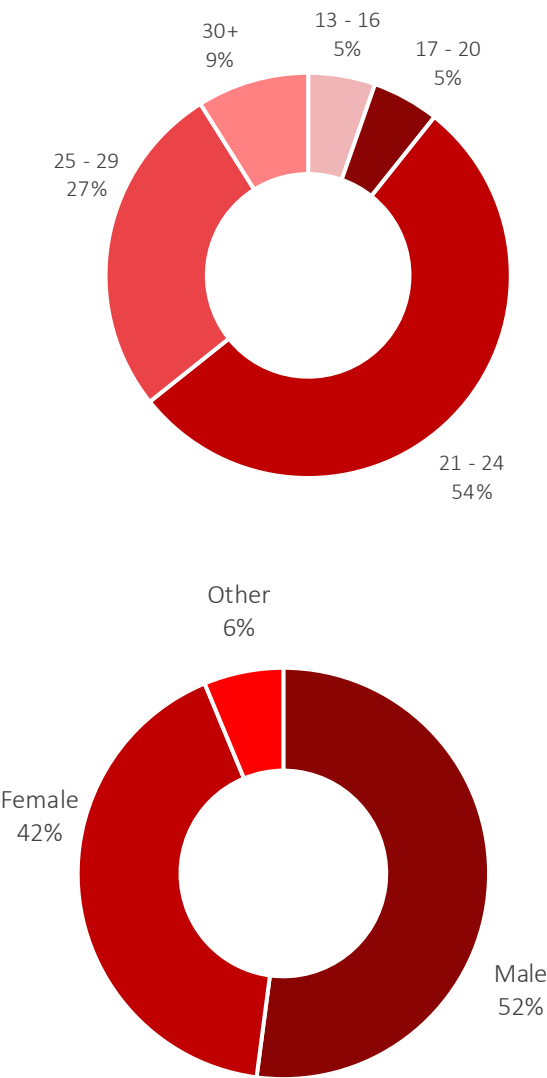
This quarter reinforced that when events are participant-led and rooted in celebration, people respond deeply. Young people are more engaged when they're showcasing something they've worked hard for, and audiences connect more when they're invited into a moment of achievement. Moving forward, we're leaning further into this by opening Dojo up as a platform where young people can bring their own ideas, take the reins, and learn through doing. By supporting them to run events — from promotion to performance — we're helping them build confidence, gain practical experience, and strengthen real career pathways in the live performance and events sector.

DOJO

SUMMARY



Estimated participants: **400+**



DOJO

IMAGES



OVERVIEW

Tuakana is our mentoring program designed to nurture personal growth, confidence, and wellbeing through genuine connection. Built on trust and meaningful kōrero, Tuakana provides a safe space for young people to express themselves freely, reflect on their challenges, and explore solutions with the support of experienced mentors. Each mentoring journey is guided by the pace and capacity of the participant — empowering them to find direction, take action, and build belief in their own potential. Whether it's through one-on-one sessions, group chats, or spontaneous moments in daily life, Tuakana creates pathways for personal, creative, and social development that strengthen the whole person.

SOCIAL OUTCOMES



Strengthened confidence and self-belief



Increased personal responsibility and leadership



Stronger sense of connection and belonging



Positive identity and self-awareness

WELLBEING OUTCOMES



Improved emotional regulation and awareness



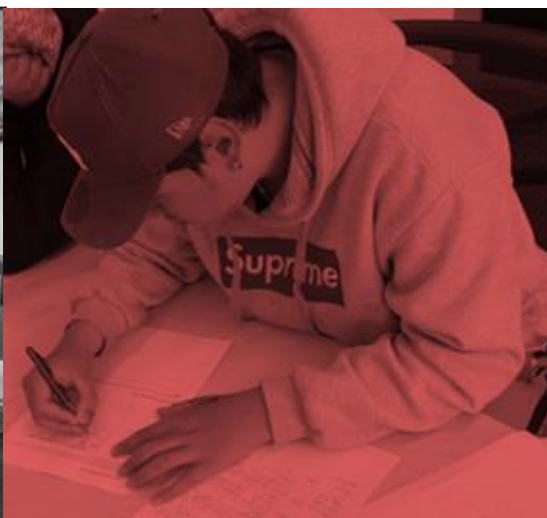
Greater resilience and coping skills



Empowered decision-making and independence



Stability through healthy routines and relationships



RANGATAHI HIGHLIGHTS



I really appreciate the energy/time from staff put into helping me on my tracks, I acknowledge it can be a draining process sometimes but I am thankful as that they still allow me to pick at their brains.

“ Blessed to have access to a programme like this in south auckland. Not many places are available in auckland that cater to young creatives. Genuinely blessed. ”

Always positive energy from everyone there and very welcoming. Never felt judged for trying which creates a great environment for creativity.

I just want to say thank you to the people at navs, especially the ones who run navs out west and the one who brought me in and introduced me to everyone and I can't wait for next year

I believe this programme should be prioritised by funders. This programme employs professionals that otherwise work freelance, who are then able to provide so much knowledge, wisdom, hope, and time into the next generation, because this programme allows them to be stable enough to make time for it. Without this ecosystem, I fear the next generation may be unable to find a creative pathway/career, and that's deeply saddening.

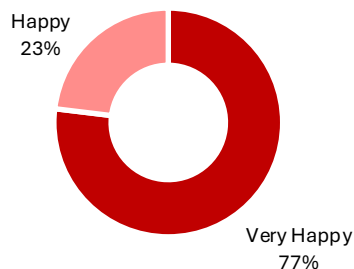
It made me confident having the support and somewhere safe to be myself with music made me happy and bring back my love for writing music

The opportunity I've received from just participating is more than just hope but an answer to problems going on in my life. Finding this program when i did helped direct me on a path away from things id normally do so please keep it going.



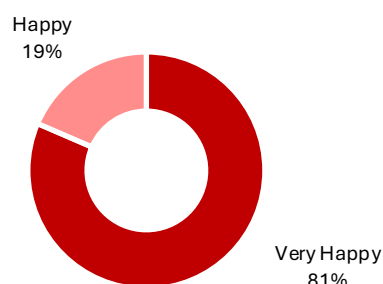
FEEDBACK ANALYSIS

HOW OUR RANGATAHI FEEL



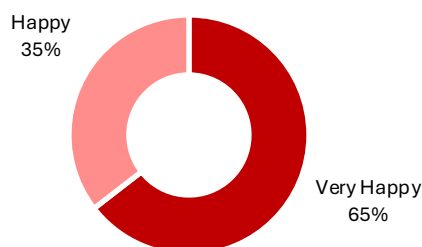
HAPPY WITH THE PROGRAM

"The facilitators, the participants that show up are super talented and the whole environment is very welcoming and fosters creativity and friendships. I've met some good friends through Te Karanga Trust's Navigators Programme ever since 2017-18"



HAPPY WITH THE FACILITATORS

"This programme employs professionals that otherwise work freelance, who are then able to provide so much knowledge, wisdom, hope, and time into the next generation, because this programme allows them to be stable enough to make time for it."



HAPPY WITH THE FACILITIES/VENUE

"Connection, community and inspiration. No amount of money could buy what we have created here within these walls and inside one another. I am so very lucky to have such an opportunity like this"

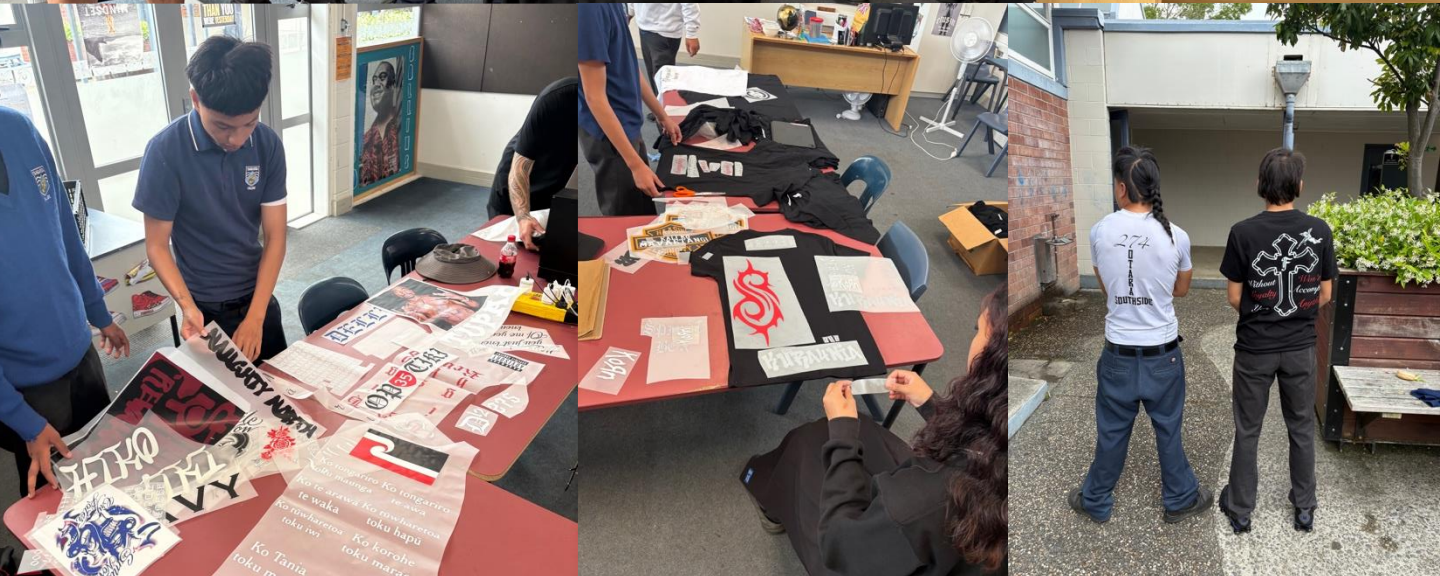
PARTICIPATING ON THE PROGRAM HELPED ME TO...



MORE IMAGES



MORE IMAGES



MORE IMAGES

